

PARITY OR POVERTY?  
THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF INCOME INEQUALITY

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## ABSTRACT

Both historical evidence concerning women's employment in the United States and recent studies of regional employment shifts and nonmetropolitan industrialization suggest that the kinds of jobs held by women may be among those most affected by firms' investment and relocation decisions. This assumption is based on two interrelated attributes of female employment and of female-employing industries. First, women continue to be employed in an extremely narrow range of occupations and industries. Second, the industries in which women constitute the primary labor force are most likely to use relocation as a cost-reduction strategy and to consider labor characteristics and flexibility as primary factors in making locational decisions.



Parity or Poverty?  
The Spatial Dimension of Income Inequality

Two apparently contradictory trends describe women's employment in the United States during the past thirty years. The number of women in the labor force has increased steadily while their income relative to that of men has shown no appreciable change. The segregation of women into a small number of occupations and industries has, in fact, continued throughout the period.<sup>1</sup> The persistence of income inequality in the face of major changes in women's employment suggests that the phenomenon cannot be reduced to simple notions of discrimination. Alternatively, we can examine the ways in which occupational and industrial segregation of women is directly and indirectly structured by the decisions of firms. One type of decision with particular import for income equality among women and between men and women is that which determines where various economic activities will be located.

As is the case with most long-term social and economic relationships, the unequal status of women in wage labor takes different forms in different historical periods. During the most recent period of economic transformation, two trends appear to characterize the location of employment for women. One is the tendency to make more discrete distinctions within the female labor force, that is, to distinguish among types of female workers. The second is the tendency to locate economic activities that use large numbers of women workers in places where the female labor force is attractive because of its low cost and tangential commitment to wage work. As a consequence, employment for women in traditional female occupations appears to be increasing in areas where women's work has been confined to the household or, if outside the household, has been limited, low-paid, and frequently interrupted. Evidence also suggests that these changes in the location of female employment are associated with increasing competition for

the decreasing number of secure, highly paid jobs in those regions in which women command higher salaries and benefits.

To put these ongoing processes into better perspective, I will first examine the relationship between macroeconomic processes and the construction of local labor markets, then suggest how the demand for female labor has been shaped by the labor requirements of different types of industries.

### Investment and the Construction of the Regional Labor Market

In search of broad generalizable patterns, labor market analysts have largely ignored the pattern of regional difference. Lack of attention to the ways in which labor markets are constructed from region to region has inevitably resulted in the conception of regional economies as derivable from demand generated in the national or world economy. The model region is all too often depicted as a static territorial entity with fixed labor supply characteristics. By comparison, new approaches to industrial location have made considerable strides in bridging microeconomic and macroeconomic levels of analysis by examining the meso-level, the region, more carefully. At the heart of much of this recent work is the attempt to dissect investment decisions and draw out their locational implications (Pred; Storper; Markusen; Clark). These analyses, along with the recent rich literature on industrial restructuring in the United States and Great Britain, provide convincing evidence of how changes in factor demand are expressed in investment and thus locational patterns (Massey and Meegan; Bluestone and Harrison). In particular, these approaches emphasize analysis of the changing demand for production factors as profit conditions and the requirements of production change. The investment decision an enterprise makes therefore dominates its decision about location. Differences among regional labor markets are thus the result of a set of

historical decisions to locate particular economic activities in particular places. Regions, however, are not passive receptors, for people respond in a variety of ways to the economic constraints and possibilities that confront them.

Decisions about investment, and thus about location, will frequently hinge on perceptions of the quality and cost of labor in different regions. This pattern is true on a world scale (Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye) and also interregionally in advanced industrial countries such as the United States (Clark). In addition to varying in cost and quality, segments of the labor force also differ in bargaining power as conditions of capital accumulation change, requiring, for example, a new set of skills. The characteristics of labor supply in a city or region are, in large measure, a product of (1) the types of economic activities located in the region over time, and (2) the ways in which the labor force has been segmented according to ethnicity, age, race, and gender. This historically created differentiation within the labor force assumes special significance when, relative to other factors of production, labor cost and quality become key variables in investment decision.

#### Investment, Location, and the Demand for Female Labor

To understand how women's labor supply is formed requires an analytical recognition that women's status in the labor market is fixed not only by employment relations but also by family roles and the household division of labor. The centrality of gender roles to the definition of women's work has been explored theoretically (Barrett and MacIntosh; Hartmann 1976, 1981) and demonstrated historically (Kessler-Harris; Matthaei). The continuing importance of gender in job definition and status has tended, however, to become obscured as more women are employed in "nontraditional" jobs such as law, medicine, and college teaching. The point too frequently ignored is

that the nature and status of these occupations are changing, not simply their gender composition. We can see one result of the intersection of labor demand and gender in the way jobs are designed to make use of gender-specific characteristics (thus reproducing them) or located so as to attract a more "womanly" segment of the female labor force.

My conception of how the demand for female labor is constituted from place to place through an industry's investment-location decisions is at odds with the types of labor market analysis that ignore the social creation of labor supply characteristics. It also diverges from approaches that focus on the social relations of production as the only social relations germane to the employment contract. Rather, I expand upon the latter approach by examining how regional labor demand intersects with the social relations of the family and the formation of household income. One consequence of this intersection is the creation of regionally specific conditions for women's work.

#### Locational Patterns in Female-Employing Industries

Within the relatively small number of industries employing women, identifiable locational patterns appear to be associated with industrial types. Three broad types embody the kinds of interaction which occur between gender roles and labor demand in the context of changing profit and investment conditions.

The first type comprises those manufacturing industries, such as textiles, in which the demand for female labor originated in the household division of labor. Before the Civil War, the lack of capital mobility in the American textile industry allowed the predominantly female labor force to negotiate relatively advantageous terms of employment. The independence of these workers was enhanced by the marginal rather than central role of their income in the household economy (Dublin). This was, of course, an



exceptional case, in which the lack of locational alternatives for industry meshed with a relatively economically independent female work force.

As capital mobility increased in the late nineteenth century and specialized manufacturing centers developed, regional variations in the cost of female labor influenced the location of industries that had originally employed women. The cotton textile industry moved from a few cities in New England to small cities and towns in the Piedmont. The manufacture of higher quality textiles, such as silk, however, stayed close to New York City, in places like Patterson, New Jersey, "the silk city," as well as Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Allentown and Easton, Pennsylvania (Alexandersson). The difference between these two locational patterns lay in the more localized market for expensive textiles and the need for proximity to the designers of high-fashion apparel. The market for cotton, in contrast, had become national, in the context of the time. Access to raw materials and cheaper labor in the upper South drew industry away from its northeastern origins.

Until the early twentieth century, the manufacture of women's apparel, another female-employing industry, was overwhelmingly located in New York City. The rapid changes of design in this industry tied it to New York, where cheap labor was provided by a steady stream of female migrants who found work in the city's garment district. Eventually, women's apparel, or the particular segments that became standardized, followed the locational pattern of the textile industry, from a market-based northeastern location to intraregional decentralization and then to another region altogether.

In both textiles and apparel, the intraregional and interregional moves were to locations in which male employment in industries in the primary sector was seasonal and unpredictable. Unreliable male incomes in these regions created conditions similar to those of the casual labor market in

some early industrial cities, where female employment outside the home was necessary for a household to achieve a basic subsistence income.<sup>2</sup>

In the second type of industry, female employment does not dominate the industry as a whole but rather is segregated by occupation or industrial segment. Although industries such as those producing automobiles, chemicals, and electrical machinery, as well as printing and publishing, have a predominantly male labor force, they incorporate segments that either (1) constitute subindustries within the broader production process (such as subcontracting suppliers in the automobile industry); (2) use work processes resembling those in female-employing industries (consumer electronics in the electrical machinery industry); or (3) produce goods used primarily by women (cosmetics in the chemical industry).

Most of these industries were originally located in cities in the manufacturing belt. Women held very different kinds of jobs in these industries depending upon local labor market conditions (Oppenheimer; Long). As capital concentration and mobility increased between 1920 and 1950, however, the sex-typing of jobs became more rigid. In some industries, such as auto assembly, this rigidity was associated with the ability of large production units to segregate the female portion of their work force occupationally. In addition, the auto industry was organized so as to separate final assembly jobs, located in large plants in Detroit and later in suburban regional centers throughout the United States, from the manufacture of auto parts. Parts were produced in smaller, more competitive factories, some of which, such as those specializing in wiring or upholstery, were likely to employ a predominantly female labor force.

In the consumer electronics segment of electrical machinery, production took place in large assembly plants in which the work force was predominantly female. These plants mimicked production methods used in the

original female-employing industries but tended to follow locational trends similarly to the auto industry, from northeastern cities to the manufacturing belt, following the expanding national market.

More self-contained industrial segments, such as cosmetics within the chemical industry, were located in small, specialized manufacturing cities in order to avoid patterned bargaining effects that would result from location in areas with more unionized male labor forces. The industries, characterized by small-batch production and an important design and advertising component, never strayed very far from the design and marketing capital, New York City.

As these examples indicate, the female segmental industries vary enormously in their locational patterns and industrial organization. They commonly consist, however, of the most labor-cost-sensitive and high-risk segments of industries in which, overall, labor cost is not the preeminent locational consideration.<sup>3</sup>

The final set of female-employing industries to be analyzed with respect to locational characteristics comprises the service industries, including the clerical or office industry. These are among the most difficult to analyze because they are rarely sufficiently statistically disaggregated and are frequently perceived as spatially ubiquitous. They are critical to an understanding of female employment in the United States, however, because they have provided jobs for women in large numbers since the 1920's in consumer services, in retailing, and in the clerical segment of producer services.

Before the 1960's, the service sector could be adequately characterized as spatially ubiquitous. Service employment in urban areas was relatively closely associated with city size. In rural areas, retail and consumer services were the two primary sources of employment for women outside the home or farm.<sup>4</sup>

Even before the recent shifts that have produced a much more spatially differentiated service sector, producer services exhibited a distinct locational pattern, reflecting capital flows rather than population size. Thus, as capital concentrated in ever larger firms between 1920 and 1960, the locations of headquarters became centers of producer and administrative services, with a resulting increase in the demand for clerical workers. This development has been responsible for much of the expansion in female employment since the 1920's (Long). Initially, clerical workers were principally urban middle-class white women between 18 and 25 years of age. As this labor pool decreased in the 1950's, because of the low birth rate in the 1930's, at the same time that demand increased, a new female labor force was tapped for clerical work. Older married women entered the clerical labor force in increasing numbers in the 1950's; they were eventually followed by ethnic minority women. The shifting composition of labor demand maintained the low wages of clerical workers. It also infused the labor force with new groups of female workers whose primary commitment was not to advancement in the work force but to the family.

#### Recent Industrial Change and Its Impact on the Spatial Distribution of Women's Employment

Recent changes in the spatial distribution of women's employment in the United States have taken place in the context of more general interregional shifts in production. Among the dynamic factors contributing to this new context for decision-making by firms are the expansion of markets for goods and services, the increase in international competition, and the rise of transnational firms. The constraints and capabilities presented by an expanding market and increased competition have also been affected by innovations in communications and transportation technology.

In the economy as a whole, employment in the services has increased

relative to that in manufacturing. Much of this growth has occurred in business services such as accounting and advertising (Stanback and Noyelle, 1981).

Changing profit conditions have had varying effects on firms, depending upon the mix of industries in which they are engaged. Some have shifted from production- to market-oriented locations. Increasing competition in the world capital market has encouraged firms to diversify by acquisition in order to provide internal sources of financing (Stanback and Noyelle). Local employment is frequently controlled by a firm with headquarters outside the region of production. A wide range of industries and industrial segments has become more sensitive to labor cost (Storper). This sensitivity has precipitated a series of shifts in the location of industrial production, research and development, and administration. Capital investments in technological advances have also been made to reduce labor and increase productivity, and firms have adopted practices to make the work force more flexible (Christopherson, 1983).

Changes in the organization and orientation of firms have affected regions and metropolitan areas differently depending on the particular local mix of industries and industrial functions. Expansion of the producer service sector is, for example, closely linked to the economic vitality of international finance and headquarters cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Although the shifts occurring in the United States economy are frequently reduced to simple spatial or industrial dichotomies (frostbelt versus sunbelt, sunrise versus sunset industries), the processes involved and the regional differences that result are variable. For the most part, they are better explained in terms of industrial dynamics than regional characteristics. Clearly, one significant byproduct of the economic transformation is an increase in disparities among

incomes and social classes within and among regions (Gertler; Zonana; MacDougall). These disparities are not simply a consequence of jobs lost or gained but of the kinds of jobs available in a particular region, their rates of pay, the stability of employment they offer, and the full- or part-time status of the workers they employ.

In contrast with the recent past, firms now have a much wider range of options with regard to location and organization of production. This flexibility is attributable partly to the large size of many firms. Transnational firms especially are better able to distribute their activities so as to exploit differences in regional labor cost and quality or to lure a desired labor force with regional amenities. In light of these capabilities, the ability of employers to distinguish and choose among female labor forces with differing characteristics is now of major importance. The choices being made have important implications for the location of women's employment and for patterns of income inequality.

Information on the effects of current economic processes on women's employment is limited because studies of the restructuring of the United States economy typically do not consider effects on particular populations. Sufficient information exists, however, to demonstrate that the employment of women is central to the restructuring process. For example, the rate of women's participation in the labor force among the population 16 to 64 years of age rose from 34% in 1950 to 52% in 1980; by contrast, during the same period, the rate of participation by men fell from 87% to 78%. In addition, the gap in labor force participation between rural and urban women is decreasing. Between 1960 and 1978, the labor force participation rate increased 18% for all nonmetropolitan women and 28% for women between 18 and 34 years of age (United States Department of Labor, Women's Bureau).

If one looks only at manufacturing, the industries in which women make

up the majority of workers have been most likely to shift their regional location in the past ten years. (See Table 1.) The disparities between fast-shifting and slow-shifting industries are dramatic. The fast-shifting industries employ an average of 51% female workers, whereas the slow-shifting industries average 15%.

The shift in interregional location, however, is only part of the story. Many of the female-employing industries, including those which made earlier moves to lower cost southern areas, have recently further decentralized production, expanding or building new plants in nonmetropolitan areas where wages are low and alternative employment opportunities few.

Female Labor Force Participation: The Decline in Rural-Urban Differentials

The increasing demand for women workers in nonmetropolitan areas is not associated with a change in the overall occupational profile of women workers. The jobs being created for women in rural areas are the same types of jobs women have held in urban areas, in clerical work and low-skilled manufacturing. The major difference emerging between metropolitan and non-metropolitan female employment in manufacturing is that a greater proportion of the nonmetropolitan jobs involve the manufacture of non-durable goods.

In those industries in which women have always been the primary labor force, the period of economic expansion in the 1950's and 1960's was characterized by investment in new facilities such as knitting mills and apparel factories, especially in smaller communities in the rural South. The labor force in these plants consists largely of rural Black women. Where employment has expanded in urban areas, it has done so in cities such as El Paso, Texas, "the jeans city," where the female labor force is overwhelmingly Mexican and Mexican-American.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in the manufacturing industries that have traditionally employed women, the trend is to locate

Table 1

## U.S. Female Employment in Slow- and Fast-Shifting Industries

Type of Industry	% Snowbelt Employment		Shift in Share	% Female
	<u>As Share of</u>	<u>U.S. Total</u>		
	1976	1959		
<u>Slow-Shifting</u>				
Primary Metals	74	81	-6.85	11
Fabricated Metals	68	74	-5.65	20
Transportation	62	67	-5.25	16
Paper	60	68	-7.78	23
Stone, Clay, & Glass	57	64	-7.16	8
Food	53	61	-7.96	30
Chemicals	53	60	-7.61	25
Petroleum	39	44	-4.93	14
Lumber and Wood	28	26	+2.61	15
<u>Fast-Shifting</u>				
Machinery	70	84	-14.15	20
Leather	70	87	-17.32	60
Miscellaneous				
Manufacturing	70	85	-15.19	47
Instruments	70	85	-14.96	43
Rubber & Plastics	66	83	-16.57	34
Printing & Publishing	66	74	- 8.04	40
Electric Appliances &				
Electronics	64	82	-18.26	42
Apparel	47	70	-22.88	81
Furniture	41	54	-12.69	29
Textile	23	37	-14.44	47
Tobacco	9	27	-17.85	36

Adapted from Table 5.3 in Stanback and Noyelle. Female employment data from United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, Revised Establishment Data (August 1981).



production in areas with large supplies of female minority labor. These new production facilities are located both inside and outside the United States. Employment in these plants fluctuated with the recession of the 1970's, but we can assume that the trend to locate production in these low-wage areas will continue, especially if more capital is available for construction of new facilities.

In manufacturing subindustries that employ female labor, there also appears to be a trend to expand or locate new plants in rural or nonmetropolitan areas. In fabricated metals, for example, the subindustries showing the largest employment gains in nonmetropolitan areas since 1967 include cutlery, handtools, and hardware (Lonsdale and Seyler). This group has a female employment rate of about 40%, in comparison with 18% in the industry as a whole (United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978). This pattern also applies in the case of electronic and electric equipment (female subindustry, household appliances) and of transportation (female subindustry, lightweight plastic and metal components) (Lonsdale and Seyler).

General studies of the growth of manufacturing in nonmetropolitan counties (Long and DeAre; Lonsdale and Seyler) indicate that industrial employment in nonmetropolitan areas is growing fastest in the rural South, particularly in the rural Southeast, and in the upper Midwest. Of the 2 million manufacturing jobs added nationally between 1962 and 1978, almost a million were added in rural areas in the South, while the North Central region gained 564,000 industrial jobs in nonmetropolitan areas, the majority of them in the Great Lakes region. The South has approximately 46% of all the nonmetropolitan manufacturing jobs, and the North Central region, 30%.

Labor market conditions provide the key to job growth in female-employing industries in the South. The rural southeastern United States

includes the poorest areas of the country. Although women throughout the United States earn \$0.59 for every \$1.00 earned by men, in the rural South that figure is \$0.47 (Shapira). Almost 50% of the households in the rural South have two or more workers, in comparison with 16% in urban areas (U.S.D.A.).

In the industries employing women as segmental labor, the spatial redistribution of production is expressed in a movement to smaller towns and rural areas of the Great Lakes region. As could be expected by its proximity to and association with the manufacturing belt, the range of industries locating in nonmetropolitan areas in this region of the country is much broader, encompassing both industrial and consumer products. The female labor force employed in the nonmetropolitan areas of the North Central region comprises predominantly white minority women.

In both the North Central region and the Southeast, previous labor demand established the need for multiple jobs and multiple workers to make up household income. In the South, local economies have historically been based in natural resources: wood products, stone, clay, and glass. In the North Central region, agriculture, food processing, and wood products have made up a different industrial mix but, as in the South, have put pressure on the household as a unit of income formation. Before the recent location of branch plants or subcontracting suppliers, the major regional industries, such as agriculture and materials for housing construction, were seasonal or highly sensitive to business cycles. The requirements of production in these industries encouraged adaptation to job instability through employment of multiple family workers or other means. The new demand for industrial labor in these regions during the past twenty years has provided a wider variety of jobs and decreased female underemployment. It has not, however, lessened the vulnerability of the household to

business or industrial cycles or decreased the need for adaptation to seasonal, part-time, low-wage employment. It has merely spread the risk among members of the household.

The new high-technology industries are often perceived as a panacea for employment problems, but their potential for improving women's employment options must be carefully qualified. The job structure of industries such as semiconductors and computers is strongly bifurcated. A small number of highly paid jobs in engineering and producer services are combined with a large number of poorly paid assembly jobs. Although the percentage of women in the semiconductor industry has stayed at about the same level, 47% for the past few years, the number of production jobs, in which women form the primary labor force, is decreasing. For more standardized products, assembly has become international. In the 1970's, 100,000 production jobs were located outside the country by firms headquartered in the United States.

Although the changing location of women's employment in manufacturing is an important part of the total picture, most women in the United States labor force work in the service sector, primarily in clerical jobs. The conditions affecting profitability among firms and industries in the 1970's had particular implications for the organization and location of these jobs. By 1970, clerical workers had become the largest component of the work force in many firms. Technological advances over the last decade, however, have increased the possible range of locations for clerical work. Data input, the labor-intensive segment of clerical work in such fields as insurance or market research, is increasingly being transferred to nearby English-speaking countries such as Bermuda. Within the United States some levels of clerical work are being eliminated by the introduction of word processors and computers, and other routine or back-office clerical work is being

located in lower cost suburban or rural locations or in mid-sized cities such as Des Moines, Atlanta, and Salt Lake City. These moves are related to salary and benefit differentials among areas and to the overall composition of the regional economy. In clerical work, the number of low-skilled jobs appears to be decreasing in central cities and increasing in rural and suburban areas and outside the United States. Female employment in clerical occupations in nonmetropolitan areas, for example, increased 35% between 1973 and 1979 (Leigh-Preston).<sup>6</sup>

Apart from clerical work, women's employment in the service sector remains concentrated in industries and occupations characterized by low pay and job instability. For example, women constitute over 60% of the work force in nonprofit services but only 22% in distributive services and 32% in public administration.

Women have always constituted about 50% of service-sector employment. During the 1960's, however, 81% of all increases in jobs held by women were in the service sector (United States Department of Labor, Women's Bureau; Stanback and Noyelle). The dramatic increase in female employment in the service sector is a consequence of the overall increase in service jobs, especially relative to manufacturing jobs. In addition, the increasing number of service jobs is partially attributable to the rising female labor force participation rate. Women workers have, in effect, created demand for services provided by other women workers.

In the service sector, particularly the business-service sector, women have made the strongest inroads into traditionally male-dominated occupations. In 1970, 60% of all female professional or technical workers were in the traditional occupations of nursing and pre-college teaching; by 1979, this figure had declined to 52%. Increases in the number of women in nontraditional occupations, including managerial occupations, were almost

strictly confined to nonminority women. Those few women who managed to find well-paid jobs in the high-growth business-service sector were much more likely to face unemployment than their male counterparts. In 1982, the overall unemployment rate for this category was 3.6%; the rate among women, however, was 4.7%.

In absolute numbers, service jobs remain concentrated in metropolitan areas. The location of various types of employment in the service sector has changed, however, indirectly affecting women's opportunities for employment and mobility in the work force. Producer services, particularly high-wage employment in such fields as advertising, accounting, finance, and law, has expanded much more rapidly in cities with international headquarters such as New York and, to a lesser extent, in regional centers such as Dallas and Atlanta. In other types of "service" cities, such as those specializing in public administration or the distributive services, women hold relatively few jobs outside the clerical field.

Because services are the fastest growing sector of the United States economy, the changing organization and distribution of service jobs will have the greatest impact on women's employment. Most of the service jobs being created, however, are low-skilled and low-paid; and since women have always held these jobs, there is little cause for optimism. Adding to the gloomy prospects are indications of strategies by firms to cut costs and manage risks in the consumer services. Particularly in the retail sector, work is being organized so as to use a predominantly part-time labor force, thus avoiding payment of employee benefits and allowing more flexibility with regard to layoffs. This tendency to create a more flexible labor force is beginning to affect more highly skilled occupations, such as nursing, graphic arts, and teaching, fields with large numbers of women workers.

The evidence currently available on the spatial distribution of women's

employment and its relationship to processes of regional differentiation provides only the broadest outlines of a complex spatial and socioeconomic pattern. More systematic information is needed in a number of areas before any definitive statements can be made. In particular, we need more information on the spatial distribution of clerical work; on the numbers of women in the new professions being created by the expansion of the producer-service sector; and on the inter- and intraregional patterns of location of female-employing subindustries in manufacturing. Despite a very slim foundation, sufficient information still exists to support important, albeit preliminary, conclusions. First, many types of women's employment are being moved to or expanded in lower wage areas, whether suburbs, rural counties, or, in a few cases, outside the United States. The expansion in women's employment has not taken place in areas where, because of patterned bargaining, unionization, or experience in the labor force, women have begun to move toward wage parity with men.

This pattern of movement generally parallels that for the labor force as a whole, but it is especially significant for women because of their historical segregation in a few industries and occupations. In effect, job segregation has been further reinforced in this cycle of investment by demand for a less experienced, more flexible female labor force that commands lower wages. The evidence of a pattern of location in areas where female labor is relatively inexperienced contradicts human capital arguments that attribute the persistence of income disparities to the characteristics of the female labor force: their inexperience and inadequate job commitment. What is indicated instead is a specific demand for women with these characteristics in preference to women with job experience and the expectation of full-time work.

Two interrelated effects of the spatial reordering of manufacturing,

clerical, and service jobs that employ women are regional convergence in female labor force participation rates and growing divergence in female wage rates and working conditions from one region to another. Spatial segmentation intersects with the tendency toward ethnic and racial segmentation of the female workforce, creating greater differences among women workers as well as between men and women.

The bleak picture I have painted only marginally takes into account the opportunities for women in new jobs in the high-technology sector and in producer services. These jobs, however well publicized, are highly competitive, locationally concentrated, and open to relatively few women. If current trends continue, the women in these well-paid, relatively secure jobs will be a mere fraction of the women in jobs such as those being created in the rural South, where women's wages have declined during the past five years.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>These trends have been widely reported in academic journals, in government reports and in the press. See, for example, Hartman and Treiman; Marshall and U.S. Department of Labor, 1982.

<sup>2</sup>The best description of the importance of gender relations to the location of industries in urban casual labor markets is found in Gareth Stedman Jones, Outcast London: "It is the men going idle that keeps our collar factory going... The great majority of the ironers are married women. I like to get them because married women for the great part of the year much work" (Jones, p. 84). The casual labor market for men in combination with low wage work for women in effect trapped both husbands and wives: "...the uncertain gamble of obtaining more regular work elsewhere entailed not only risking his [the casual worker's] livelihood but also that of his wife. Moreover it was precisely in areas dominated by casual labor that suitable unskilled female employment was most likely to be found" (Jones, p. 87).

<sup>3</sup>There were also areas in the manufacturing belt where jobs for women were few and these confined to the service sector. In a city like Pittsburgh where much of the male labor force worked on rotating shifts, constraints on women's work outside the home were increased by the organization of work for men.

<sup>4</sup>In rare cases, the demand for female labor to perform domestic work of all kinds was at a premium and fetched high prices and enhanced status. In San Francisco during the gold rush, the demand for domestic work, from laundry to prostitution, made for a boom in female entrepreneurial activity (Dobkin). In other cities or regions where the location of extractive industries or agriculture drew large numbers of male workers and relatively few females, particular ethnic groups such as the Chinese moved into the vacuum to provide commoditized domestic services.

<sup>5</sup>The labor force in El Paso is binational. Between 30 and 40 thousand people cross the Rio Grande every day from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The majority of these are women who work in the apparel plants of El Paso (Christopherson, 1982).

<sup>6</sup>Salt Lake City provides an interesting case of growth in female clerical employment in a mid-sized city. Female labor force participation in Salt Lake has risen 50% in the past ten years despite religious proscriptions and a birth rate twice the national average. Mormon women are valued employees because they are well educated and unlikely to strike.



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